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Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON
INFO AMEMBASSY BANKGOK
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY MANILA
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL CAN THO
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
USDEL JEC PARIS
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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E. O. 11652 N/ A
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SUBJECT: MAY 18 INDOCHINA PRESS SUMMARY
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1. ALL PAPERS FEATURE OPENING OF HAK- THO PARIS TALKS, WITH DEARTH OF HARD INFORMATION EMERGING. NYT' S LEWIS BELIEVES DRV CHARGES OF RECENT US BOMBING OF COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED AREAS OF SVN, PLUS CAMBODIA, ARE ON AGENDA.

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AP REPORTS HAK- THO MET WITH DISPLAY OF MUTUAL CORDIALITY (SUN). SEVERAL REPORT HAK RESPONDED " O. K." WHEN ASKED HOW TALKS WENT (CHITRIB, PHINQ). NYDN' S VALERY NOTES AMBASSADORS SULLIVAN AND MARTIN PRESENT. NYT' S LEWIS SAYS RVN- PRG PARIS POL TALKS CONTINUE WITHOUT PROGRESS.

2. CIA ANALYST SAM ADAMS RESIGNS, CHARGING INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY " GROSSLY" UNDERESTIMATING KHMER INSURGENCY AND REFUSING TO ADMIT KHMER CONFLICT IS CIVIL WAR. NYT' S GWERTZMAN REPORTS DOS AND CIA ANALYSTS DISPUTE ADAMS' POSITION AND STAY WITH OFFICIAL ANALYSIS, SHARED BY DOD, THAT KI NUMBER 40,000 - 50,000, ARE ALMOST TOTALLY DEPENDENT UPON HANOI AND RESPONSIVE TO ITS WILL. ADAMS TELLS GWERTZMAN KI ARE " VIRTUALLY INDEPEN- DENT" OF HANOI AND THEY NUMBER 200,000,100,000 OF WHOM ARE ORGANIZED INTO REGULAR UNITS. GWERTZMAN REPORTS ADAMS HAS BEEN BRIEFING MCGOVERN, CHURCH AND MATHIAS IN RECENT DAYS AND INVITED TO TESTIFY BEFORE SFRC.

GWERTZMAN NO AMS WAS ALSO IN LONG OPPOSITION TO INTELLIGECOMMUNITY ESTIMATES ON SIZE OF VC FORCES IN SVN. IN RESIGNATION STATEMENT, ADAMS SAID HE HAD TRIED FOR YEARS TO CORRECT WHAT HE THOUGHT HAD BEEN OFFICIAL MISJUDGEMENTS IN US ESTIMATES OF INSURGENT FORCES IN INDOCHINA.

3. NYT' S FINNEY REPORTS SFRC CLEARED BY 15-0 VOTE BILL, IDENTICAL TO ONE THAT DIED IN CONFERENCE LAST YEAR, THAT WOULD DEFINE AND RESTRICT WAR- MAKING POWERS OF PRESIDENCY. PROVIDES THAT, IN ABSENCE OF DECLARATION OF WAR BY CONGRESS, A PRESIDENT WOULD BE ALLOWED COMMIT ARMED FORCES TO COMBAT FOR ONLY 30 DAYS AND ONLY IN EMERGENCIES, SUCH AS REPELLING OR FORESTALLING ATTACK ON US OR ITS FORCES OVERSEAS. BILL DOES NOT APPLY TO " PRESENT HOSTILITIES" AND SO WOULD NOT REQUIRE HALT IN UNCLASSIFIED

CAMBODIA BOMBING. WITH SIMILAR BUT SOMEWHAT LOOSER BILL ALREADY PASSED BY HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUB- COMMITTEE, FINNEY PREDICTS SOME LEGISLATION ALONG THESE LINES WILL BE PASSED DURING THIS SESSION. REAL TEST OF CONGRESSIONAL DETERMINATION WILL BE DEMONSTRATED, ACCORDING FINNEY, IN ITS RESPONSE TO ANTICIPATED PRESIDENTIAL VETO.

4. EIGHT- SHIP CONVOY FOR PP COMES UNDER HEAVY KI FIRE 16 MILES EAST OF CAPITAL. REUTER PP REPORTS (NYT) FUEL STOCKS HAVE FALLEN TO NEW LOW AND SALES OF GASOLINE TO CIVILIANS BANNED. ELECTRICITY AND WATER SUPPLIES WILL BE REDUCED BECAUSE OF FIRE IN GENERATOR. UPI REPORTS (NYDN) " THICK COVER" OF USAF FIGHTER- BOMBERS PROVIDED FOR CONVOY.

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5. DRV AGREES US MILITARY TEAM CAN VISIT HANOI AGAIN FRIDAY TO INSPECT GRAVES OF 23 AMERICANS WHO DIED WHILE POWS. THIEU GRANTS AMNESTY TO 1,086 COMMON CRIMINALS ON BUDDHA' S BIRTHDAY. MILITANT AN QUANG AND PRO- GVN QUOC TU BUDDHIST FACTIONS FORM NEW ALLIANCE TO WORK FOR POLITICAL RECONCILIATION AND PEACE; JOINED BY 14 OTHER MINOR SECTS (WP). PHINQ PP REPORTS MILITARY SOURCES SAY US HAS SET UP " DIRECT AIR SUPPORT CENTER" AT FANK HEADQUARTERS TO CONTROL USAF BOMBING. THIS ENABLED US EMBASSY ELIMINATE ITS ROLE IN DIRECTING AIR STRIKES, ALTHOUGH EMBASSY STILL MUST VALIDATE TARGETS. PHINQ ALSO REPORTS SOME ELEMENTS OF FANK DON' T APPEAR TO BE TAKING WAR VERY SERIOUSLY, AND CITES EXAMPLE OF 100 SOLDIERS IN CHAUFFEUR- DRIVEN CARS TURNING OUT AT AIRPORT TO SAY GOODBYE TO TWO OFFICERS

DEPARTING FIRST- CLASS TO TAIWAN TO STUDY POLITICAL WARFARE TECHNIQUES. ACCORDING PHINQ, " IT WAS A FESTIVE OCCASION."

6. SITUATION IN SOUTH THAILAND HAS IMPROVED GREATLY BECAUSE OF DEFECTIONS BY TERRORISTS, REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDER REPORTS. ABOUT 2,000 TERRORISTS SURRENDERED SINCE 1972, NEARLY ALL REHABILITATED AND UNCLASSIFIED

RELEASED (AP, NYDN).

7. EVANS/ NOVAK (WP), IN KONTUM CITY, REPORT THAT LOW- LEVEL COMMANDERS OF 23 RD ARVN NEGOTIATE ILLICIT ARRANGEMENTS WHICH BUY PEACE BY GIVING TERRITORY TO COMMUNIST FORCES. NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT LOCAL ACCOMMO- DATIONS ARE INFREQUENT ELSEWHERE IN SVN WHERE MILITARY SITUATION IS VASTLY LESS GLOOMY THAN IN KONTUM WHERE GOVERNMENT TROOPS ARE DEMORALIZED, FEARFUL AND WEAK. GVN HOLDS ONLY 5 PERCENT OF KONTUM PROVINCE (ALTHOUGH NEARLY 90 PERCENT OF ITS POPULATION); KONTUM CITY IS INDEFENSIBLE AGAINST ANY MAJOR OFFENSIVE WITHOUT HEAVY B52 SUPPORT.

8. LORDGORE- BOOTH (CSM) ASSERTS THAT NVN STRATEGY IS TO PUT DOUBLE PRESSURE ON SVN - INFILTRATION WITHIN AND FURTHER PRESSURE FROM WITHOUT IN THE ONE PLACE WHERE SVN STILL HAS FRIENDLY FRONTIER, CAMBODIA. SAYS OUTSIDE WORLD HAS SOME RELUCTANT PERCEPTION OF THESE POSSIBILITIES. IMPLIES THAT AUSTRALIA' S ALP GOVERNMENT MAY NOT BE ABLE PURSUE ITS DUAL POLICY OF WITHDRAWING FROM DEFENSE COMMITMENTS IN SEA, WHILE INCREASING ITS ACTIVITY AND INFLUENCE ON THE SOCIAL, ECON, AND AID FRONT. EXPRESSES VIEW THAT AREA FROM WHICH SOME INFLUENCE OR PRESSURE MIGHT BE EXPECTED IS INDIAN

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SUBCONTINENT, WHOSE ULTIMATE POSITIONS WILL NO DOUBT
BE AFFECTED BY SOMETHING OF WHICH THERE IS LITTLE
KNOWLEDGE: DEGREE OF INFLUENCE OF USSR AND PRC ON
CONDUCT OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN SEA.

9. LAT' S FOISIE (MAY 17), IN PP, ASSERTS THAT
ASSUMPTION OF PREMIERSHIP BY IN TAM, WHO IS NOTED
FOR HONESTY AND HAS CONSIDERABLE POPULAR APPEAL,
IS BASIS FOR HOPE THAT ALMOST PARALYZED GOVERNMENT
LEADERSHIP AND INEPT MILITARY FORCES CAN NOW RESUME
MEANINGFUL OPERATIONS AND GIVE GKR BARGAINING
POSITION. IN TAM CONSIDERED ONLY MEMBER OF SUPREME
STATE COUNCIL WITH WHOM REBELS MIGHT PARLAY OVER TRUCE
TERMS. CITES LONG- TIME POLITICAL OBSERVER' S REMARK
ABOUT 21- MAN CABINET: " THEY ARE NOT INSPIRATIONAL CHOICES

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BUT WILL WORK TOGETHER IF THE BIG FOUR WORK TOGETHER."
RUSH

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